TO: Chair and Members
   Emergency & Community Services Committee

WARD(S) AFFECTED: WARDS 6, 7, 8 and 9

COMMITTEE DATE: February 17, 2010

SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Short Term Funding for Neighbour to Neighbour’s Resource Counselling Program (Wards 6, 7, 8 and 9) (CS09062(b))

SUBMITTED BY: Joe-Anne Priel
               General Manager,
               Community Services Department

PREPARED BY: Brian Kreps (905)546-2424 Ext. 4288

SIGNATURE:

RECOMMENDATION:

That the General Manager of the Community Services Department be authorized and directed to fund Neighbour to Neighbour’s Resource Counselling Program, from April 1, 2010 to June 30, 2010 at a cost of $19,858 from the Social Services Initiative Fund.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Neighbour to Neighbour’s Resource Counselling Program provides valuable services to Hamilton Mountain Residents. The program’s funding from the Homelessness Partnering Strategy ended September 31, 2009. Council directed the General Manager of Community Services to fund the program from October 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 through the Social Services Initiative Fund.

A Budget Enhancement has been submitted for annual funding for this program through the City of Hamilton’s 2010 Budget Process. The outcome of the Budget Process will not be known until the end of February at the earliest. This timeline would give Neighbour to Neighbour Centre little time to take the appropriate steps in the event that...
the Budget Enhancement is not approved. It is recommended that the General Manager be directed to extend the funding for three more months at a cost of $19,858.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 3

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for Recommendation(s) only)

Financial:
Funding would be limited to three months at a cost of $19,858. The funding would come from the Social Services Initiative Fund (SSIF). This withdrawal would essentially draw the SSIF down to $0.

Staffing:
There are no staffing implications.

Legal:
There are no legal implications.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

Neighbour to Neighbour’s Resource Counselling Program provides support to people who need assistance with housing, utility arrears, emergency food, legal or domestic abuse issues. The program provides some services directly and in other cases it provides clients with information and referrals to other agencies as well as advocacy. It is the only program of this nature available to people seeking services on Hamilton Mountain. The program operates with a variety of paid staff and volunteers at an annual cost of approximately $80,000 per year.

The Resource Counseling Program’s funding through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) ended September 31, 2009. The Resource Counseling Program’s application for renewed funding was not found to be a good fit with the HPS’s new funding criteria.

A Budget Enhancement has been submitted, as part of the City of Hamilton’s 2010 Budget Process, to cover the annual cost the program. Through Report CS09062(a), Council directed the General Manager of Community Services to provide short term funding to bridge the program until the outcome of the Budget Process is known.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

N/A
RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Corporate Services Department, Finance and Administration Section

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

(include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data, if applicable)

Staff recommends funding the Resource Counselling Program for an additional three months. It is anticipated that the 2010 Budget will be approved no earlier than the end of February. In the event that the Budget Enhancement is not approved, the program would cease operation or be greatly reduced. Appropriate notice periods would be required for staff and clients. Clients would need to seek services at other agencies, most of which are located in the lower city. This distance would present a significant barrier to many people for whom transportation and lack of familiarity with downtown might make them less likely to obtain the needed service.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

(include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and pros and cons for each alternative)

Council could elect not to provide the additional three months of funding for the program.

Financial:
This decision would result in no added direct cost to the City. It would, however, mean that the program’s bridge funding may run out before the outcome of the Budget Process is known. This decision could result in reduced service levels or ceasing operation.

Staffing:
There are no staffing implications.

Legal:
There are no legal implications.
**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**  (Linkage to Desired End Results)


**Social Development**
- Residents in need have access to adequate support services.
- The Resource Counselling Program provides a vital role in helping to link Hamilton Mountain Residents with a wide range of services.

**Healthy Community**
- Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services).
- The Resource Counselling Program provides assistance with accessing health services, housing, utility assistance and emergency food services.

**APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

None.